

What Congregation Do I Support?

June 17, 2018

“We are commanded to give as we have prospered. However, if you attend a sister congregation rather than your home congregation, how should your contribution be distributed?”

I have been asked this question (although phrased differently) several times throughout my ministry. It is a good question and is asked with a sincere heart. Every Christian should follow the example given by the apostle Paul and join themselves to a local congregation (Acts 9:26-28). In doing so we join fellowship with the body in that particular location. Our partnership is with that congregation, our personal obligations are to that congregation and its leadership. Therefore, it is to that congregation that I am obligated to give to further the Lord’s work.

If one is on vacation or away from their home congregation for any other reason, he should realize that bills still come at regular intervals even when members attendance is not regular. Therefore, to aid the overseers of the congregation, we should give in a regular and predictable manner so as to help with the congregational budget. If we plan to be out of town, the right thing to do is to plan ahead and leave our contribution behind to be collected on that day (especially when absent lengthy amounts of time) or make up the missed contribution when we return.

Visitors, whether Christian or non-Christian, are not biblically obligated to finance congregational work nor should they be expected to. The biblical pattern presents each congregation as autonomous or “self-governed.” The financing of the congregation and its work is part of that governing process. However, there is no harm or foul, if one should desire to give additionally to a visited congregation. Most of us know how hard it can be to find faithful congregations when on vacation. When fortunate enough to find one, it makes sense to give them our blessing by supporting them too, when we can.